

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE FIRST
SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SECURITY
OF AND IN THE USE OF ICTS (December 2021)**

**Agenda item 3 – Organisation of work: Statement on Multistakeholder
Modalities**

Australia appreciates that there is much to discuss this week, and we have a significant amount of work ahead of us over the term of the Open-Ended Working Group.

We look forward to beginning those discussions on substance.

Before we turn to those matters – given the length of this process and the significance of this discussion, it is important to discuss and decide, together, how this process will operate.

In the previous OEWG, despite all non-ECOSOC accredited organisations being disallowed to participate in our meeting, there was robust multistakeholder engagement.

This was due to the initiative of specific member states, most notably Singapore, which organised and Chaired the intersessional multistakeholder consultation in December 2019,

And also Canada, which co-sponsored, along with Australia, the EU, and others, the virtual ‘Let’s Talk Cyber’ consultation event in December 2020.

Australia remains a strong supporter of meaningful multistakeholder participation and engagement.

As the Canadian / UK / delegates noted, the multistakeholder community plays an integral role in the issues under discussion in this group.

Cyberspace is unique – the private sector, the technical community, and cybersecurity experts play a vital role in its technical management and governance.

The multi-stakeholder community can provide perspectives that help us better understand emerging cyber threats, their impacts, and how to address them. That role should be recognised in the discussions of the UN OEWG, to help us come to our consensus decisions, as states.

Australia therefore supports the principles for meaningful multistakeholder engagement set out in the Open Letter to the Chair of [8 and 10] December 2021.

In particular, Australia supports increased transparency in the processes for the participation of intergovernmental organisations, civil society, industry, the technical community and academia in our discussions, including a transparent process for accreditation requests by non-government stakeholders and for objections to those requests.

All states agreed, by consensus, in the 2021 OEWG report, that future mechanisms discussing international peace and security of ICTs under the auspices of the United Nations should “be inclusive, transparent, consensus driven, and results-based”. [*A/75/806 para 74*]

This message was reiterated in our current mandate, which convenes an OEWG “with a view to ensuring the uninterrupted and continuous nature of the democratic, inclusive and transparent negotiation process”. [*A/Res/75/240 OP1*]

The ambition set forth in this OEWG’s establishment for open, inclusive, and transparent discussions, and reiterated by its initiators in a vision paper, gives Australia confidence that we will not fail that vision at its first hurdle.

In the OEWG’s organisational session in June, several modalities for multi-stakeholder participation were proposed.

Additionally, the Open Letter sets out principles to guide our engagement towards an ongoing conversation between States and Stakeholders.

Australia supports a mechanism that facilitates meaningful dialogue between all parties, that is coordinated, impactful, and maximises the limited time that we have together during formal sessions.

Australia hopes that this procedural issue will be concluded today, so that we can move on to our substantive discussions with confidence and certainty.

We welcome the views and constructive suggestions of all states towards a consensus solution.

Thank you.